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ABSTRACT

Effective building leadership and time utilization are important to the success of implementing change. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the experiences of an urban junior high school principal involved in a collaborative change effort. Specifically studied were the principal's actions, behavior, communication, and reflections as she responded to teacher requests and utilized grant resources in attempting to design a school master schedule that included common planning time for the teachers. The study is unique in two ways. First, it represents a case study (designing a master schedule) within a case study (the principal's experiences as a change agent) within a case study (the restructuring process). A second unique feature is that a university professor and the principal were co-researchers of the study. How the researchers came together is explained by the context of the study. (Contains 42 references.) (Author)

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ED 482 351

School Restructuring: Fitting the Pieces Together

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Abstract

Effective building leadership and time utilization are important to the success of implementing change. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the experiences of an urban junior high school principal involved in a collaborative change effort. Specifically studied were the principal's actions, behavior, communication, and reflections as she responded to teacher requests and utilized grant resources in attempting to design a school master schedule that included common planning time for the teachers.

School Restructuring: Fitting the Pieces Together

Public schools are under pressure to change to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. To address the demands currently placed on schools, building principals are frequently involved in leading change efforts themselves or in collaboration with others. Often the experiences and needs of building principals are overlooked during this change process. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the experiences of an urban junior high school principal involved in a collaborative change effort. The study is unique in two ways. First, it represents a case study (designing a master schedule) within a case study (the principal's experiences as a change agent) within a case study (the restructuring process). A second unique feature is that a university professor and the principal were co-researchers of the study. How the researchers came together is explained by the context of the study. Specifically studied were the principal's actions, behavior, communication, and reflections as she responded to teacher requests and utilized grant resources in attempting to design a school master schedule that included common planning time for the teachers.

Literature Review

Many authors have linked the leadership and reform efforts of principals to improved school culture and instructional practices (ASCD, 2002; Copland, 2001; DuFour, 2002; Franklin, 2002; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Short & Greer, 2002; Sparks, 2002; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997).

Principals as Change Agents

What leaders think, do and say impacts not only the performance of school organizations but also determines whether or not they are collaborative in nature (Fullan &

Hargreaves, 1996; Sparks 2002). Leadership (or lack of it) affects the shared decision-making process and can encourage or impede learning (Gelly, 1999/2000). Change occurs in environments where principals model collaboration and support risk-taking among the faculty (Lambert, 2002; Short & Greer, 2002). According to Copland "today's principals are charged with 'big picture' responsibilities to strike a vision, lead from the center, and build a community of learners" (2001, pp. 529 & 530). Historically, teachers have worked in isolation and have not viewed themselves as members of a learning community. This isolation has been detrimental to learning, because "the teachers cannot be aware of approaches and strategies that others have found successful, and might even be working at cross purposes without even knowing it" (Danielson, 2002, p. 62).

Leading Learning Communities

Salazar (2001/2002) found that principals' greatest needs for professional development were in the areas of building team commitment and creating a learning community. One of the most important keys to establishing and leading a learning community in a building is for the principal to model life-long learning and striving for excellence himself/herself (Franklin, 2002; Fullan, 2002; Hessel & Holloway, 2002). According to Fullan and Hargreaves, "The principal as collaborative symbol is one of the basic keys to forming and reforming the school culture. What he or she does, pays attention to, appreciates, and talks or writes about all count" (1996, p. 89). The principal in a learning community is more than simply a manager; he/she is also a teacher of teachers and the lead learner (Franklin, 2002; Fullan, 2002; Sparks, 2002).

Principals as Instructional Leaders

Although today's principals should be strong instructional leaders as well as successful school managers, in reality many principals have little impact on instructional practice (Fink &

Resnick, 2001; Schmoker, 1999). Building leaders wonder how, with their myriad of other responsibilities, they can become instructional leaders. "Solid knowledge of instruction…isn't all there is to the job of instructional leadership" (Fink & Resnick, 2001, p. 600). The principal has to lead by creating a culture of learning and by providing the right kinds of specialized professional development opportunities (Fink & Resnick, 2001, p. 600). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) noted the importance of principals' involvement in providing for staff development. ISLLC Standard 2 states that "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program" (Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 49). In order to improve the school's instructional program, principals must focus on the professional development of teachers.

Principals as Professional Development Leaders

As a precursor to educational reform, many authors have called for a reform of professional development practices (Fullan, 2002; Glickman, 2002; Guskey, 1995, 2002; Sparks, 2002; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). In the past, professional development activities were not evaluated or carefully scrutinized in terms of their relationship to improvement of instruction or even their overall value (Guskey, 2002; Schmoker, 1999).

Educational leaders need a guide for providing the kind of staff development that is necessary for all students to achieve at high levels. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 2002) have promulgated standards for effective professional development. Quality professional development:

- focuses on student learning,

- is collaborative (learning communities),
- is job-embedded,
- is a long-term commitment,
- is research-based, and
- requires leadership and resource support.

Overcoming Barriers to Collaboration and Professional Development

Unfortunately, there are many factors that can inhibit building principals from either providing quality professional development for teachers or successfully fulfilling other expectations in their roles as instructional leaders. These inhibitors may include, but are not limited to, financial and time concerns, the principals' other duties, the staff development process itself, current school structures, perceptions of teacher professionalism, and lack of external support.

Zimmerman and May (2003) reported that although principals recognize their pivotal role in the professional development process, the majority reported financial restrictions and time constraints as major barriers to their roles as instructional leaders. By reprioritizing the use of precious discretionary funds in their buildings, principals and teacher leaders can ease some of the financial restrictions on professional development. Additionally, to help alleviate both financial and time constraints, principals must assertively request assistance for their work from district offices and boards of education. A number of authors have called for abundant support from central/district offices for adult learning and collaboration for principals and teachers in their quest to improve student achievement (Andrews & Rothman, 2002; OhioASCD & SDC of Ohio, 2002; Sparks, 2001). Providing evidence of the relationship

between staff development programs and increased teacher and student learning will help to justify principals' requests for support.

The literature not only offers many suggestions for overcoming the barrier of time, but also encourages principals' and teachers' creativity in order to free teachers to pursue some of their professional development on "company time". "Banking time", "buying time", utilizing common planning times, and adding professional days to the school year are job-embedded approaches to staff development (Richardson, 2002). Implementing an early release on the fifth day of the week for professional development might be accomplished by schools banking time by adjusting their master schedules to lengthen the school day for a few minutes the other four days (Sparks, 1999). Encouraging teachers to engage in inquiry-based collegial activity to improve their instruction is another way that principals can help to embed professional development in the teaching practice. Examples of low-cost inquiry-based learning might include examining/critiquing student work, examining teacher work (i.e., lesson plans and other instructional materials), developing authentic assessments, and forming study groups (Killion, 1999; Sparks, 1999). Principals build school capacity by establishing structures for teacher learning, linking teachers to external expertise, and helping them to create their own changes internally (Youngs & King, 2002).

Collaborative Planning

Principals in the Zimmerman and May study (2003) reported that practices learned at "one-shot" professional development meetings were not usually sustained. Instead they mentioned such multi-faceted activities as providing a professional library for teachers, participating in monthly staff focus groups centering around a professional book, and meeting

by departments to share successful strategies and review proficiency test sub-scores to determine student needs.

According to Danielson (2002), "it is virtually impossible to separate the benefits of collaborative planning from those of collegial professional development" (p. 93). "Joint instructional planning…is one of the most powerful tools a school can use to meet its goals for students. Of course, successful team planning does not happen by accident; it must first be pre-arranged and accorded a high priority" (Danielson, 2002, p. 62). "When teams are organized, the manner in which their members work together is greatly influenced by the master schedule" (Danielson, 2002, p. 92).

While many school leaders are struggling to find crucial collaborative planning time for their teachers, teachers who consider themselves professionals should review their beliefs about the ownership of time. "In some schools, the culture decrees that time is the sole property of individual teachers. In other schools, time is understood as shared for the good of the whole organization" (Peterson, 1999, p.3). If teachers were willing to make the trade-off of losing their individual planning periods on certain days, it would be easier to create common planning time (Richardson, 2002). More time for professional development and team planning could be accomplished if teachers demonstrated more flexibility in how they think about their schedules and were more willing to make some trade-offs (Richardson, 2002).

Using Collaboration Time Wisely

Once time is "found" or scheduled for professional development and team planning, the next issue to address is whether or not the time is being used productively to improve teaching and learning. Principals can create and sustain a positive culture in their schools related to professional learning time through their symbolic actions and model behaviors, (Peterson,

1999; see also Fullan, 2002). For example, by focusing on teacher learning at their faculty meetings, principals can model using time more effectively. In order for teachers to believe that collaboration time is valuable, it must produce results (Danielson, 2002; Schmoker, 2001). "Teams are too important to be left to chance. Staff members need to develop effective norms and guidelines for team meetings so that war stories and chitchat do not eat away at your precious time together" (Lambert, 2003, pp. 13, 77). To ensure that teachers use team-learning time productively, principals should establish expectations, specify the content, require written records, and even teach group processes and decision- making (Hirsch, 2002; Richardson, 2002).

Context of the Study

Effective building leadership and time utilization are important to the success of implementing change. Principals' actions, attitudes, collaborative behaviors and communication all have an impact on the culture and the performance of the buildings they lead (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Short & Greer, 2002; Sparks, 2002). Consequently, principals must discover ways to create and sustain learning community cultures in their buildings. Although the literature has addressed the principal's role in advancing school reform, enhancing school culture, and providing professional development, there is a huge gap in the literature about the daily experiences of a building principal relative to these efforts.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the experiences of an urban junior high school principal involved in restructuring her building. The strength of the study is that it was a collaborative research effort with one researcher being the building principal herself, Harriet, and the other being a university-based researcher and teacher, Judy. Because

the manuscript is co-authored, to avoid confusion, we chose to use third person (i.e., Harriet, Judy, she, her, them) when discussing the researchers, their work and beliefs.

Research Questions

The general research questions of this study were, "What are the experiences of an urban junior high school principal involved in a collaborative change effort?" and, specifically, "What are the experiences of the principal as she attempted to design a master schedule for the junior high school?" The sub-issues of the research study, that emerged as Harriet began to work with the master schedule, included the following:

- What is the impact of the master schedule on the change effort at the junior high?
- What did the principal do to design the master schedule?
- What persons and resources were involved in the principal's response to this task?

GEAR UP: A Five Year Grant

"Faculty in successful schools always question existing instructional practice and do not blame lack of student achievement on external causes" (Glickman, 2002, p. 4). As part of a collaborative five-year federal grant with the university, Urban Junior High School committed itself to restructuring in order to improve teaching and learning. GEAR UP, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness Programs, is a United States Department of Education $4.7 million grant for the creation of partnerships between several universities, public schools (locally, Urban Junior High and Urban High School), and numerous other community based agencies and organizations. Among its many goals, GEAR UP is designed to increase the number of students prepared for college by improving teachers' instruction and by enhancing the articulation between the elementary, junior high school, and high school. (GEAR UP, 2003).

One of the specific goals of GEAR UP is to restructure schools to provide sustainable systemic structural reform (GEAR UP, 2003). The restructuring includes extensive professional development for teachers in order to improve student achievement. Interventions included in the restructuring plan are to provide common planning time for teachers and establish teaching teams at each grade level (GEAR UP, 2003). As part of the GEAR UP grant the building principal, Harriett, and the teachers agreed to organize the building into interdisciplinary teams or clusters to facilitate faculty collaboration for instructional improvement.

Another GEAR UP goal is to improve opportunities for professional development for teachers. Interventions included in this goal include establishing after school graduate courses and integrating professional development into common planning time facilitated by lead teachers/site coordinators (GEAR UP, 2003). Consequently, a restructuring priority for the teachers at Urban Junior High was to have common planning time. Common planning time was featured in the first year's action plan of the grant. It was brought up continually as what the teachers really wanted and needed. Harriett, within the parameters of the grant program and internal/external constraints, was charged with trying to satisfy her teachers' legitimate requests and do what was best for students. Focusing on redesigning the master schedule to accomplish common planning was an intense instance of Harriet's work as a transformational leader. Therefore, this paper represents the saga of Harriett's efforts and how her understanding of issues in scheduling in particular and restructuring in general evolved.

The Researchers

Before becoming the principal at Urban Junior High School six years ago, Harriet's career path in educational administration included being an assistant principal at both the high

school and junior high school levels. She has also been a school dean, a counselor, and spent 17 years as a teacher at both the elementary and junior high school levels. Several years before the GEAR UP grant was initiated, an Urban Schools committee had studied aspects of the middle school concept, including clustering or teaming. Earlier still, a few individual junior high schools in the district had already begun to structure their teachers into grade level clusters. Some of the teachers on Harriett's staff had come from these schools. These teachers informally developed their own alliances for multi-disciplinary teaming. When GEAR UP came to Urban Junior High School, it "opened the door" for Harriett and the teachers to talk to one another about restructuring their school, including instituting clustering. Harriett knew the potential GEAR UP had to benefit everyone, particularly the children who would be given an opportunity to dream.

The invitation in 2001 to act as one of the university resource consultants for GEAR UP gave Judy an opportunity to "give back" to the profession. Before becoming an assistant professor in educational administration, Judy gained leadership experience as a superintendent, high school and middle school principal, and middle school counselor. She demonstrated her belief in collaborative decision-making during her tenure as a building principal and superintendent. She believes that transformational leadership is important to the success of implementing change. Her research interests include leading organizational change in schools, collaborative decision-making and continuous improvement planning in schools, and the relationship between leadership practice and student learning. Consequently, she was not only drawn to work with Harriett; but also this type of service is expected of university faculty members.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership was chosen as the theoretical framework for this qualitative case study. Transformational leadership is defined as "leadership in which leaders use their charisma to transform and revitalize their organizations" (Greenberg and Baron, 2000, p. 462). Unlike transactional leadership, which is characterized by quid pro quo interactions between the leader and followers, transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership is also characterized by engagement between leaders and followers bound by a common purpose (Burns, 1978). The effects of transformational leadership on an organization are that it:

- Stimulates others to view their work from new perspectives
- Creates awareness of the organization's mission or vision
- Develops other's abilities to higher levels of performance
- Motivates others beyond self interests toward the benefit of the group or organization (Bass & Avolio,1994)

Koh, Steers, and Terborg's study (as cited in Greenberg & Baron, 2000) regarded the effects of transformational leadership on teacher attitudes and student performance. The researchers found that a positive correlation between the level of transformation of the principals and the degree of job satisfaction and commitment of the teachers. How well the students in their schools performed could also be predicted, to a lesser degree, by the principals' transformational leadership scores (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). The results of a study by Geijsel, Sleegers and Berg (1999) indicated the significance of the dimensions of transformational leadership in relation to changed teacher practices.

Bennis (1984) described four competencies that enhance transformational leadership:

- Attention - developing a shared vision

- Meaning - communicating the vision to others
- Trust - believing in people and remaining focused
- Self - knowing personal skills & deploying them

For the restructuring effort at Urban Junior High School to be successful, a transformation in the school organization and in Harriett's leadership style was imperative. Participation in the GEAR UP grant showed promise of engaging both Harriet and the teachers in developing a shared vision for their school. They were bound by the common purpose of increasing the number of students prepared for college and improving teachers' instruction. One GEAR UP goal to develop teachers' and students' abilities to higher levels of performance included extensive professional development for teachers. Central to Harriett's sharing her decision-making power with teachers would be her trust that they would work, beyond their self-interests, toward the benefit of their students and their school.

Methodology

As part of Judy's work as a GEAR UP consultant, she had already been meeting with Harriett. Harriet indicated that she appreciated using Judy in the role as "sounding board". Judy described the nature of this proposed study to Harriett and asked her to be a co-researcher. Harriett and Judy decided their joint participation in the study might help them to reflect together on the collaborative process that is being undertaken by Urban Junior High School and the university. A qualitative case study was most appropriate given Harriet's and Judy's relationship. A case study is "an exploration...over time through in-depth data collection involving mutliple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p.61). Instead of acting as "researcher" and the "researched", they formed a collaborative research team with the value of bringing an insider/outsider perspective to the study.

Although none of the junior high school faculty or staff members were the subject of this study, they were part of the context. Therefore, Judy explained the consent process to these individuals and asked their written permission for her to take field notes of their interactions with Harriett. Judy explained that the study would not be anonymous to either of the researchers about the context individuals, because their comments would only be recorded when both Harriett and Judy were present. Therefore, Harriett would already have had access to them and their identities regardless of this research. However, Judy informed the faculty and staff that in any manuscript their identifying details would be removed or fictionalized.

In order to interpret some of the problems that impede school change, Harriett participated in a number of informal interviews and on-going conversations with Judy during the school year. No set interview questions were asked because of the nature of their relationship. Judy also "shadowed" Harriett during cluster leader meetings, administrative team meetings, whole staff meetings, building retreats, and individual meetings between Harriett and faculty/staff members and students. Judy took field notes during each of these meetings to record Harriett's interactions.

Having been a both a junior high and high school principal, Judy relished the opportunity to again work in a school setting. Judy really enjoyed getting to know Harriett and the others at Urban Junior High. This opportunity also brought back memories of the excitement, challenges and frustrations of being a building principal. Throughout the year, Harriett and Judy engaged in many on-going conversations about these issues.

Near the conclusion of the school year, Judy conducted a more formal taped interview with Harriett, particularly focusing on her reflections of the scheduling process. During the interview, Harriett also shared some of her joys and frustrations about the past year's

experiences. The transcript of that recorded interview, along with Judy's field notes, formed the basis of this manuscript.

The collected data were analyzed in terms of transformational leadership theory – both how Harriett's experience exemplifies aspects discussed in the theory and how the case study contributes new aspects to understanding of transformational leadership theory. Data were also analyzed for the tensions between reform ideals on the one hand and the reality or logistics of developing a master schedule to implement a reform on the other.

Developing the Master Schedule

Developing a master schedule for classes has been one of the job responsibilities of principals in the Urban Public Schools. Harriett's task was to redesign the master schedule for this building of 887 students. Creating a functional master schedule is no easy task for a building principal. It is very similar to working a massive mega-piece puzzle. The principal operates under many constraints as s/he tries to construct the puzzle. These "border pieces" or parameter constraints include but are not limited to sharing teachers with other buildings, offering various elective courses for students including "singleton" classes such as concert band and show choir, and operating under district limitations regarding the hiring of additional staff. Among the total number of students at Urban Junior High School there are 144 special education students, including students labeled as developmentally disabled (DD), hearing impaired (HI), learning disabled (LD), and severe behavior handicapped (SBH). Harriett wanted to match the needs and wants of both the students and the teachers. She especially wanted to schedule common planning time for the academic teacher teams or clusters. Principals effective in developing and maintaining collaborative school cultures provide

common planning time during the workday for teachers to plan instruction and make decisions collaboratively (Danielson, 2002; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Because all students do not learn in the same way, Harriett believes that they need various methods of instruction. Harriett believed that by scheduling common planning periods across the curriculum, she would enable teachers to engage in some integrated teaching and allow the students to better develop. Unfortunately, according to Canady and Rettig (1995), the school schedule, in particular, often makes teaming efforts difficult. At the very least, Harriett wanted to structure time for the math and science teachers, and language arts and social studies teachers to come together to bridge with other areas, thereby strengthening students' learning.

When Harriett decided to redesign the master schedule to include common planning time for the teachers, Judy volunteered to help with the project. The challenge of helping to put together a schedule "puzzle" appealed to her, because Judy had had experience in scheduling gained from several positions at both the junior and senior high school levels. From her own experiences, Judy appreciated the complexity of the task. The phrase, "every student must be somewhere" sounds simplistic but is at the heart of constructing a master schedule. "Singleton" courses such as honors band and any courses taught by traveling teachers tend to drive the schedule.

How time is structured and utilized during the school day is important to any reform effort. The schedule is reflective of the curriculum and instructional values and beliefs of the school's educators. "When teachers work together to plan and implement the curriculum everyone seems to benefit" (Danielson, 2002, p. 92). Harriett and Judy believed that if Urban Junior High School teachers wanted to collaborate to improve instruction, the schedule needed to accommodate their need for time to do this.

Harriett's Past Scheduling Experiences

When Harriett assumed the principal's position at Urban Junior High School, she had almost no experience in developing a master schedule. Her predecessor had completed the schedule over the summer before her first year as principal.

In each year of the first three years when Harriett had the task of developing the master schedule, the district made some kind of change that resulted in difficulties in fitting the schedule puzzle pieces together. Because the counselors at the school had never had to help design the master schedule, they were unable to provide any background information or guidance in the task.

During the first time that Harriett tried to develop the master schedule, the school district purchased some new scheduling software from Canada. She had to learn the new software plus the scheduling process! The person that the district hired to train the principals had never completed master scheduling before. It was a comedy of errors that first summer. A few weeks before school started all of the principals had to convert back to the original scheduling software program. In order to be ready for the opening of the school year, Harriett enlisted the aid of her school counselors. Although the counselors did not know how to develop the schedule either, somehow they all worked together to get it done.

During Harriett's second experience of scheduling, the district continued to use the old scheduling software. However, the district still changed some expectations regarding the schedule part way through the process.

During Harriett's third experience of scheduling, Urban Junior High School became involved in the five-year grant program. At the time scheduling started, it appeared that she would have enough staff to provide common planning for the teachers for the following school

year. However, district level administrators in charge of staffing the buildings determined that her building was going to exceed its allotment of faculty members. One change made at the district level to alleviate the staffing problem was to switch from quarter grading periods to semesters. Staffing cuts precipitated at the district level resulted in Urban Junior High School losing one Work and Family teacher, a half-time foreign language teacher, and a half-time music teacher. Additionally, the district decided in June that there would be three levels of math in the junior high schools for the next school year. This decision was relayed to the principals after the teachers had gone for the summer and only two weeks before Harriett's vacation (non-contract) time was to begin.

Although Harriett's first three experiences in master schedule development were less than positive, she approached this year with a sense of optimism that she indeed would be able to fit those puzzle pieces together in order to benefit the students in her building.

Collecting Data for the Master Schedule

During the current academic school year, Harriett collected data for scheduling in much the same way that data had always been collected. Each year during the winter or early spring the first stages of the scheduling process actually begin. The school counselors talk to the current sixth and seventh grade students about their core classes and elective choices for the next school year. All of the Urban Public School junior high schools offer the same courses for their students. The core classes include reading, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The teachers prepare recommendations for placement in some classes, such as mathematics and honors. Honors classes are provided in all of the core courses. To fulfill additional state department of education standards for this level, all students are also required to take health, physical education and at least one art class. The junior high school students have

many elective choices, including family and consumer science, industrial technology, music, foreign languages (French, German and Spanish), band (several levels), orchestra (several levels), handbell choir, and chorus. The first three electives listed above meet for a semester. The rest of the electives are yearlong courses.

Other student considerations when constructing the master schedule include those students requiring special education classes and those students who had failed seventh grade core courses. By law, schools must address the needs of special education students, such as inclusion in regular (general education) classes and any classes taught by intervention specialists. Students who must repeat classes that they failed increase the overall enrollment in those classes.

After the counselors orient the students to their next year's classes, the students are given course information and request sheets to discuss with their parents. Once the course schedule sheets are returned to the school, the counselors and principal literally sit at the computers and hand enter each student's classes for the next school year! Every student and every course have their own identification numbers. The data entry for each student may contain as many as a dozen ID numbers, including not only course information but also numbers for homerooms (clusters) and lunch. This hand scheduling is a monumental task that is very time-consuming. Naturally, both the principal and the counselors have many other duties during this same time that require their attention. Judy also sat at the computer for some hours entering student and course data. Because of her daytime duties, Harriett had to spend many evenings and weekends toiling at this clerical task. This extensive time demand, among others faced by Harriett, appears to be one of the expectations of any secondary principal (Eckman, 2002).

The Conflict Matrix

After all of the students' requests for courses were entered into the computer, Harriett was finally able to obtain reports about the success of the scheduling process. The conflict matrix is one of the most important reports to help the principal in fitting the master schedule puzzle pieces together. The conflict matrix lists all of the students' individual classes that are scheduled for every period of the day. This specific report gives details about the periods of the day and courses that were the problem areas. In reviewing this conflict matrix, the principal can see which students were unable to be scheduled in all of their classes. For example, the report may show that "Jenny Jones" has requested two different electives that are scheduled during third period. The report may also show that Jenny has no classes scheduled for fourth period. The principal may be unable to switch one of Jenny's electives to a different period or unable to juggle her schedule to fill her fourth period slot, because of a "singleton" course that Jenny needs, such as honors science. Daily access to this conflict matrix report is very important to the master scheduler. However, there were times when Harriett would make a change on Monday, but couldn't see the effect of that change until Wednesday.

After analyzing the conflict matrix report, Harriett tried to move puzzle pieces around to solve all of the problems that she discovered. For example, if 100 students were unable to be scheduled for health (a required course), then she would need to consider moving health to a different period. This sounds quite simple. However, Senge (1990) has cautioned leaders to consider an organization as a system of interrelationships. Moving one puzzle piece, ultimately affects many other pieces. Harriett ran many conflict matrix reports and moved puzzle pieces many times as she tried to create the most effective schedule for her building.

The master schedule must be completed in a timely fashion not only so that students know where their own "puzzle pieces" fit, but also so that Harriett would know her staffing needs for the following school year. If enrollment, particularly in the core courses, increased beyond a certain amount, Harriett knew that she could request additional faculty members.

Outcome of Harriett's Work on the Master Schedule

The major focus of Harriett's work was to restructure the Urban Junior High School master schedule to provide common planning time for clusters/teams. Based on their research and talking to one another, the faculty at Urban Junior High School wanted to change. One of the goals of the five-year federal grant was to establish common planning time.

During the previous school year the district hired one of the junior high school principals to help supervise the scheduling processes of the district's seven junior high schools. Harriett was again committed to developing a master schedule that included common planning time for the teachers. At first she thought that she had finally accomplished this goal. Unfortunately, she discovered that she had hundreds of students with schedule conflicts. By analyzing conflict reports and moving puzzle pieces, she tried for two more weeks to resolve them. By restructuring the Occupational Work Experience (OWE) course, Harriett was creative in offering an additional elective to more students for the next school year. This made a difference of 100 students versus the maximum of 25 students who had previously been eligible for the program. Finally, the schedule supervisor told her, "Harriett, you just can't do it!" Harriett wanted to cry. She simply did not have enough faculty members to give all of the teachers a common planning time by cluster/team.

Initially the staff members hoped that the federal grant administrators would provide them with funds for additional faculty members in order to realize this goal. Unfortunately,

this was not possible; because one of the grant's restrictions is that any programs initiated with grant funds must be sustainable by the district. Harriett doubts that this will happen.

Harriett thinks that providing a common planning time for teacher teams is a great idea, because she has seen good things happen when teachers work together. She believes that this collaboration can support all teachers. "A school climate that encourages involvement in decision making is characterized by openness and risk taking and an environment that encourages teachers to try new ideas and approaches" (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 151).

Therefore, when Harriett was unable to provide common planning time across all teams/clusters, she worked cluster-by-cluster, taking into consideration each team's characteristics and the individual personalities and needs of the teachers. She was able to schedule some common planning time for each teacher with at least one partner. Where she could, she scheduled common planning periods or at least common lunch periods for combinations of two language arts teachers, a math and science teacher, or a language arts and social studies teacher. In one cluster Harriett provided common planning time for a language arts teacher and a math teacher, because they had already shown an interest in collaboration this past year. Harriett wanted to encourage these teachers' attempts to integrate their subject areas and did not want to stifle their creativity. Harriett's actions appear to be in accordance with Fullan and Hargreaves' (1996, p. 88) statement that "valuing teachers who constantly seek to expand their repertoires and who search for opportunities to learn from their colleagues is more productive than endorsing a particular program or method."

The next year's schedule still provides the teacher clusters/teams with 30 minutes each morning before school starts to meet for common planning. Harriett hopes that the teachers

will use this time productively to improve their instructional practices and ultimately improve student achievement.

> At the same time, the professional nature of the role also imposes responsibilities on teachers. Working with a time-clock mentality prevents teachers as well as others from thinking of teaching as a profession. Professional educators must assume responsibility for understanding content, the cultural environments from which their students come, and the design of coherent instruction....Teaching is a profession—we must have no doubt about that. But if it is to be treated as a profession, then the responsibilities as well as the benefits deriving from that status must apply. (Danielson, 1996, p. 27)

Danielson's observations have particular meaning in the Urban Public Schools, where traditionally, the teachers' union has demanded reimbursement for teachers for any time spent beyond the "regular school day". Urban Junior High School teachers may need to reexamine what teacher professionalism means if they truly want to restructure their building. As Harriett struggles to balance students' needs with those of her staff members, she can take heart in Tomlinson's (1999, p. 114) statement that "effective administrators are sources of both light and heat. They help teachers see the benefits of new initiatives while simultaneously insisting on progress."

Implications

Lack of faculty members continues to be a barrier to implementing common planning time for clusters/teams. Urban Junior High School teachers teach six class sections per day and there are only five teachers per cluster. Therefore, it is difficult to block the schedule or to provide common planning time. Ideally, in each cluster Harriett would need five teachers who taught only five periods per day. Each teacher could have one period for individual planning

and one period for common planning with colleagues. The building needs to have enough teachers ("specials", elective) to balance the "core" teachers when they are not teaching. In reality, the building schedule is similar to the one at a high school where students are offered electives. When the district used a quarter grading period system, the students were offered a "piece of everything", so that when they went to the high school they were able to make informed decisions. But now the building is forced to limit the students' choices and cannot offer them as many experiences.

Harriett heartily supports the idea of offering many elective courses for the students at Urban Junior High School. As mentioned earlier, the other junior high schools within the district also follow this procedure. Harriett believes in providing students with choices, within scheduling constraints, so that they can explore their strengths and interests. Unfortunately, this positive practice has negative consequences when trying to design a master schedule. The resulting multitude of "singleton" courses have made it impossible, without adding additional teachers, to schedule common planning time for all the teachers. The scheduler has few or no options in trying to move students from period to period because so many of the classes have only one section. Multiple sections of the same class offer the scheduler much more flexibility. Judy believe that before Urban Junior High School can realize its goal of common planning time for teachers, it must reconsider its emphasis on providing multiple elective courses. Judy suggests exploring the possibility of decreasing the number of periods in the school day and adjusting the school schedule to offer fewer electives. By doing this, Harriett might be able to help provide teachers not only with common planning time, but also with larger blocks of uninterrupted class time to institute differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 111).

Another of the puzzle fitting tasks required of master schedulers is to try to balance class sizes. Because not all students take the same classes at Urban Junior High School, this is very difficult if not impossible to accomplish. Therefore, Harriett needed to ask the central office administration for permission to negotiate with certain teachers to add additional students to some of their class periods. Currently, the district administration has discouraged this practice for financial reasons. However, the negotiated agreement sets certain enrollment limits per course section. If the course exceeds the maximum allowable enrollment, the principal must ask the teachers to take additional students and pay the teachers for this overload.

Another factor that affects the schedule besides staffing and enrollment is the facility itself. Urban Junior High School needs a place to put any additional classes that Harriett might add. At one time the building had three industrial technology classrooms. Now it just has one. Special education needs are so much different from what they were twenty years ago in terms of the space and rooms needed. For the following school year, the building has obtained a modular for the BIC (behavior intervention) class. This has freed up a room for one of the special education teachers. Although Urban Junior High School is trying to institute inclusion for some of its special education students, classroom space is still needed for those students who benefit from a small group setting.

Harriett's Recommendations

Harriett has tried to avail herself of different resources, such as attending some scheduling workshops, because she knows that scheduling is a priority of her job. She understands that creating a master schedule is a very complex task about which one does not just say, "Oh, I can do that" without preparation. Harriett is encouraged with the knowledge she has gained through her experiences. She has learned to be patient and to sit down to think

through the process systematically the best that she can. Harriett cautions that a master scheduler needs this time for concentration, because it definitely is a task requiring focused concentration. Working on the schedule is not something that one should do after having a rough day. One needs quiet, uninterrupted time, to reflect.

Collaboration with staff members on the schedule can be a good thing. Harriett has always encouraged faculty suggestions or recommendations on many topics and issues. Some of the faculty members and counselors may have some excellent scheduling ideas that could be implemented. Collaborating with someone else also allows the scheduler some exchange and discussion time in order "to bounce ideas around". This is good because it helps to clarify one's thinking. However, collaboration can also be a problem for the master scheduler. Naturally, staff members do not have the benefit of the experience in scheduling that Harriett and other principals have worked so hard to gain. Because of their lack of knowledge and/or their lack of ultimate responsibility, staff members might offer simplistic recommendations to a complex problem and be angry with the principal when their suggestions cannot be implemented. Harriett has also felt that by encouraging suggestions, she may have made herself somewhat vulnerable to criticism. Some staff members and others might perceive that the principal asking for help is a sign of weakness. According to Copland (2001, p. 529), "Principals are now commonly portrayed as the key actors in school-level reform and face an audience of multiple constituencies who are ever more critical of their craft."

Harriett's recommendation to prospective assistant principals and/or principals is not to assume that someone else in the building is responsible for developing the master schedule. Attending scheduling workshops is helpful, because one can at least learn the mechanics and some of the priorities of the process. Although a person may be successful at working puzzles,

this process does not come naturally. If someone claims to put together a master schedule in a week or two, it is probably a person who has nothing else to do and also has access to the resources and tools to make the schedule work. As the principal gets to know his/her building, he/she will learn the priorities of that building and the uniqueness of its master schedule.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996, p. 89) stated that, "In short, the principal as collaborative symbol is one of the basic keys to forming and reforming the school culture. What he or she does, pays attention to, appreciates and talks or writes about all count." The time and effort that a building principal devotes to designing, developing and implementing the master schedule demonstrate his/her commitment to the culture of the school. However, the principal cannot accomplish this vital task without support. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996, p. 101) stressed that "while individual schools can become highly collaborative without the board, they cannot *stay* collaborative in the absence of active board support."

Conclusion

This qualitative case study represented a case study (designing a master schedule) embedded within a case study (Harriett's experiences as a change agent) within a case study (the restructuring process at Urban Junior High School). Harriett's actions, behavior, communication, and reflections were studied and analyzed as she attempted to design a school master schedule that included common planning time for the teachers. The specific aspect of the case study, designing a master schedule, was chosen because of the schedule's impact on providing time for team planning. Common planning time for teachers is not only a goal of the GEAR UP grant, but is also a critical element of job-embedded professional development for teachers to improve instruction.

Principals' leadership is key in school reform efforts. Transformational leadership was chosen as the theoretical framework for this qualitative case study. Harriett has exhibited transformational leadership competencies Bennis (1984) in that she has:

- worked with her staff to develop a shared vision,
- communicated the vision to her staff members through her commitment to providing common planning time,
- evolved in her belief and trust in her staff members to make decisions for the good of the students, and
- explored her own personal skills and deployed them.

In the cyclical nature of school processes, it is again time for Harriet to begin developing the master schedule for the next school year. Hopefully, reflecting on her past experiences has been fruitful and will give her insight into this latest endeavor. Additionally, as Harriett engages in a more transformational leadership style, her leadership will transform herself and her staff members "from the selves that they are into the selves that they should be. As a result of the transformation, people are poised to be true to their better selves" (Price, 2003, p. 68).

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